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The Ballad of Prose and Rhyme.

When the roads are heavy with mire and rut,
In November fogs, in December snow,
When the North wind howls, and the doors
Are shut—
There is place and to spare for the pains of
prose;
But whenever a scent from the white-thorn
blows,
And the jasmine stars at the lattice climb,
And a Rosalind face at the casement shows,
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!
When the brain gets dry as an empty nut,
When the season at ends on its equinox toes,
When the mind (like a beard) has a "formal
cut"—
There is place and to spare for the pains of
prose;
But whenever the May-blood stars and
glows,
And the young year draws to the "wanton
prime"—
Whenever the Romeo courtship goes,
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!
In a theme where the thoughts didactic strut,
In a changing quarrel of "Ayes" and
"Noes,"
In a starchy procession of "It" and
"But"—
There is place and to spare for the pains of
prose;
But whenever a soft glance softer grows,
And the birds are glad in the pairing time,
And the secret is told "that no one
knows,"
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

Miss Bertha's Valentine.

Everybody said that Miss Bertha was
very much alone in the world, wondered
what on earth she would do if her eyes
and health should fail her, and pitied
her in that easy-going way which sub-
tracts nothing from the pocket, but
leaves a residue of self-satisfaction in the
conscience, while they paid as little for
her services as they could help. But
Miss Bertha never grumbled, she put as
many stitches and as much eye-sight into
the free sewing as if she had been paid
a decent for every stitch. It was
her way never to slight anything. But
sewing was not the only occupation in
which she excelled. If any poor strug-
gling mother with little children toddling
about her fell ill, Miss Bertha quitted
her needle into her cushion and stepped
into the breach; when waiters failed,
Miss Bertha came to the front; and
when the small-pox visited the little sea-
port of Great Herrington, it was she
who went about from house to house,
giving draughts and doses, comforting
the dying, and making the dead ghastly
toilets for the dead.

"What does it matter to me?" she
said, when some one expostulated at the
risk. "There's nobody in the wide
world to mind whether I live or die. I'm
the light of nobody's eye, and as for
disfigurement—law! I left off caring
for my good looks, such as they were,
twenty years ago. Time was when I
should have been as scared as any of
you about being marked and losing my
complexion; but it doesn't signify in the
least now. If I was as ugly as a night-
mare, folks would give me their sewing
to do just the same, I suppose."

"Oh, but I should hate to be so dis-
figured that Sam wouldn't like to look
at me!" said Sue Blair, all pink and
white, and eighteen, with the world be-
fore her.

"I dare say; but there's no Sam to
care whether I'm a fright or not," said
Miss Bertha, drawing in her breath with a
quick gasp, as if the fact hurt her.

"You don't know, Miss Bertha,"
laughed giddy Sue; "your Sam may be
on the road to you."

"A precious long road,"
"Why, Aunt Janet was as old as the
hills before she married Uncle Artemus,
and Parson Chapell's second wife was
no chicken. Everybody has chances,
they say."

"Yes, I suppose everybody has
chances; but some of them are mighty
small—hardly worth calculating," she
returned.

Miss Bertha, to be sure, never ac-
cepted anything but thanks for these
services in the sick-room; indeed, few
dreamed of offering any remuneration.
One might have supposed that the uni-
verse had provided her for their benefit,
along with seed-time and harvest, the
common air, and other common
blessings for which nobody was expected
to render any return than to make use
of them. Her neighbors staid at home,
stifling with burned brimstone and a
camphorated atmosphere, and yet
caught the infection, while she walked
abroad in the thick of it, shirking noth-
ing, and came out, like those holy men
from the fiery furnace, unscathed,
yet more or less reduced in fleshiness.
She was a cheerful body, and doubtless
sent to carry warmth and healing into

the sick-room. But poor Miss Bertha
had not always been old and useful and
thoughtful for others.

"You have been pretty once," that
heedless chatterer, Sue Blair, had said to
her one day.

"What makes you think so?" said
Bertha, lifting her faded eyes to the mir-
ror. "It is like tracing the existence of
the extinct megatherium from the foot-
prints in the rock."

But Sue spoke truly. Bertha had
been fair in her day; the hair that was
white as the new-fallen snow had once
been brown and bonny; the eyes, which
to-day were sunken and pale, had looked
out like lucid beryls from under dark
lashes; time and toil and trouble had
robbed the satin skin of its fine texture,
and seemed it with many a line; little of
youth remained to her but a heart alive
to generous impulses, and the color that
still burned in her cheeks in spite of the
frost of her forty-odd winters. Yes, Miss
Bertha had had her heyday. Miss John-
son, the squire's daughter, who lived in
the finest house in Great Herrington,
wore silks that could stand alone and
sable cloaks reaching to her heels, and
ate off French china every day, and had
never known what it was to suffer from
hunger, cold, or fatigue, who had never
had a sorrow or a lover—even she might
have envied poor Miss Bertha those hal-
cyon days when Angus Aiken loved her,
when they walked together in the moon-
lit gardens in their English home, and
sat beside the fountains, and listened to
the silvery monotone, like some sad and
gentle voice complaining. No doubt
Miss Johnson would have bartered all
her dry-goods and imported finery for an
experience as rich as this of her elderly
seamstress, about whom no romance
seemed to linger. To be sure, every-
body in Great Herrington knew that after
the visitation of the small-pox Parson
Chapell had invited Miss Bertha to share
his temporal blessings, which consisted
of a small salary and four mischievous
boys with torn jackets and dirty faces.

"The parson wanted a housekeeper,"
the neighbors agreed. "Of course a
man of his age don't fall in love like a
boy—with an old maid too! Seems as
though she must have thought he'd ask
again—with a house all carpeted from
garret to cellar, and the gentry in his
gates, so to speak! I wonder what Miss
Bertha expects—at her times of life too
—when offers of marriage aren't as plenty
as wrinkles."

But Miss Bertha expected nothing.
There was that in her history which she
would not exchange for the kingdoms of
the earth and the glory thereof; the dust
of twenty years had in no wise tarnished
the brightness of it. She had her anni-
versaries which no one reckoned but her-
self—delicious anniversaries of half-
gilded happiness—days full of sunshine
and the music of the spheres; dark and
cruel days, when the clouds that threat-
ened showed no silver linings. On such
a morning so many years ago, Angus and
she had gone out to gather spring flow-
ers, and the wood had been full of spicy
odors, and the pale bloodroot was wait-
ing for them, its petals all on tiptoe; at
such another date they listened to the
nightingale's fluting, while the stars
stole out as if to listen with them, and
the new moon hung a golden bow low in
the heavens, and she had asked, "Do
you never wish by the new moon, Angu-
sus?" "Never," he had answered;
"but I shall to-night; I shall wish that
you may love me forever and ever."

And then he had kissed her, and "the
nightingales kept fluting." There was
that day in June which should have
been their wedding-day; and the time
when he kissed her last, under the
golden laburnum-tree; and then that
dreary morning when her father came
home, black as a thunder-cloud, and
swore she should never marry the son of
the man who had ruined him, who had
robbed him of the inheritance into the
possession of which he had put all
his money's hopes, and his energies
for years. Bertha had refused to re-
nounce her lover on account of his
father's wrong; there had followed a
scene; then her father had seemed to
soften, and had traveled to London with
her to talk the matter over with a law-
yer. She had been glad enough to go;
for was not Angus somewhere in the
great throng of London at his work?
Would she be sure to meet him? But
the day she reached the great noisy
city her father had taken her out
and on board a ship, eight-seeming;
and suddenly, while she looked and listened
and wondered and talked with the cap-
tain, who was in the secret—suddenly
the shore, the masts, the steeples, began
to recede, and they were standing out to
sea, bound for America. Oh, what a
long and hateful voyage it was! How she
longed for the sight of Angus, to say
just one parting word, to tell him it was
no fault of his, and that she should
love him forever and ever! What ter-
rible days they were which carried her
farther and farther from England! The

fine weather seemed wasted without An-
gus. When storms bore down upon them
she only shivered at the thought of
dying apart from him. But as they
drew near the New World, her father,
weakened by a long and useless strug-
gle with fortune, and broken utterly by
this "unkindness," gave up the con-
test and lay down to die.

"Promise me, Bertha," he begged—
"promise that you will never write to
that man's son, that you will hide your-
self from him. Promise me, or I shall
not rest in my grave. Promise, child,
and I shall die easy, willingly. Can you
refuse this last request?" And amidst
grief and distraction, poor Bertha
promised. And she had kept her
promise for twenty years and better.

Never one word for Angus had crossed
the water to tell him whether she lived
or died, though longing thoughts and
wishes went out to him on every wind
that blew, though night after night her
pillow was wet with bitter tears, though
he had never been out of her mind,
waking or sleeping. At first she had
comforted herself with the belief that he
would find her out himself; but, as time
passed, this hope faded and died,
and was given decent burial. How
should she know that she had proved
true, that she had loved him on and on?
Why should he not suppose that she had
left him of her own choice, because she
scooped the son of his father? No
doubt he had taught himself to unlove
her; had almost forgotten the old fond-
ness, the old hurt; had married some
good woman, and was happy by his own
fireside with his children. She hoped
he was happy; as for that good woman,
she did not care to think of her over-
much. But daily she pictured him
in the midst of his family—pictured him
young and handsome, with the color in
his smooth cheek, the bronze shade in
his waving hair, the sparkle in his eyes,
forgetting that twenty years had robbed
him of youth and its beauty.

When her father died there had not
been enough money left in the purse to
take her home to England, though
Captain Seymour would gladly have
carried her back without it if she would
have taken him for better or worse.
Afterward she had parted with her
trinkets one by one for her daily bread,
till she could earn—with all but the
shining ring that Angus had given her,
and which was now worn quite thin,
though the old legend engraved therein
was yet plainly legible:

"Though he seek till he be gray,
Love will find out the way."

But in all these twenty years she had
never saved enough from her necessities
to pay her homeward passage. If per-
chance she got a few dollars ahead, some
poor son's greater need appealed to
her; and it was now fifteen years since
she had gravitated to Great Herrington
and cast anchor, but no one in all the
place dreamed that romance had ever
touched so plain and old and common-
place a body as Miss Bertha, who was
doubtless made to sew, to tend the sick
and stir gruels and broths and mustard-
plasters, leaving the poetry of life for
her younger neighbors. She had been
out, toward the last of January, watching
all night, and as she stepped into the
frosty air and began to remember that
she was hungry and drowsy, she sud-
denly encountered Dr. March com-
ing round a corner.

"Speak of angels and you hear their
wings," said he, "I was thinking of
you, Miss Bertha, this very minute."
"Don't turn my head, doctor."

"Well, you see, the brig Abby Jane
came in last week. She's a whaler—
been off these two years. Most of the
crew belong in Great Herrington, and
the doctor take it if they aren't all down
with the ship-fever; came ashore as well
as you are, too. Now the bother is,
some have families to look after them,
and some haven't; and all the people
are as scared as they were in the small-
pox panic, and nurses can't be found for
love or money—at least not enough.
I've been up myself these two nights
with one poor fellow, who's wild as a
hawk, and I'm ready to drop; not to
speak of my other patients, and I can't
find anybody willing to look after him;
and I didn't know—I thought to myself:
'There's Miss Bertha, she's always ready
to do a good turn, and she isn't afraid of
man or the small-pox.'"

"And so you'd like me to go to him?"
"Exactly. He'll die if you don't. It's
missionary work, Miss Bertha. I don't
know as the man has a sou to pay a
nurse."

"I don't want any money if he has,"
said she.

"That's lucky. Come home with me
and drink a cup of Mrs. March's coffee,
and then I'll take you to the Herrington
Arms. There's where our patient put
up when he came ashore. Looks as if
he'd no kith or kin in the place, and I
don't remember his face in these parts."

"Poor fellow! poor fellow!" Miss
Bertha had forgotten that she had been

up overnight and was breakfastless.
"I thought, to be sure," she mused,
during the next night's vigils—"I
thought, to be sure, he was a young
man; but he is grayer than I am. I
wonder if his wife is looking for him
home soon. He isn't weather-beaten
like a sailor; his hands are white and
soft and well kept, like a gentleman's.
I don't believe he ever tarred the ropes
before this voyage. Perhaps he is re-
duced in circumstances, and went whal-
ing to seek his fortune. I wonder if he
will die." But the disease left her little
time for idle reflections and surmises,
the services of the doctor, and the occa-
sional assistance of the other nurses
whose patients were convalescing, being
all the relief afforded her. One night,
as she moved about the room, coaxing
the fire into a glow, stirring the gruel
in the porringer, discharging the ninety-
and-nine little duties of the sick-room,
it seemed to her that the patient followed
her with his eyes curiously—those great
hollow, darkling eyes, full of sad ques-
tioning.

"Do you want to ask me anything?"
she said, pausing beside his pillow, and
meeting the gaze.

"Perhaps," he faltered—"perhaps—
you could tell me—where I am—and
how—I came here? Am I awake—or
dreaming?"

"You are in the town of Great Her-
rington, at the Herrington Arms," she
answered him. "You have been ill
with ship-fever. You came in the
whaler Abby Jane, Dr. March tells me,
which had picked you off the wreck of
the Atlas, bound for New York—and
others. You have been very ill, and
you must not talk."

"And you have saved my life. I
heard the doctor say so this morning."

"Hush, hush; that's only the doctor's
palaver."

"Miss Bertha, I'm afraid you've won
that poor fellow's heart that you've been
taking care of at the Herrington Arms,"
said Dr. March, dropping in a week or
so after he had ordered her home to take
care of herself, lest he should have
another patient on his hands. "He's
been pumping me dry about you; wants
to know why you never married. I
told him because nobody asked you but
Parson Chapell, and he was too big a
pill—"

"That's because you didn't prescribe
him," said Miss Bertha.

Just then Sue Blair put her rosy head
in at the door.

"Have you smoked out, Miss Bertha?"
said she. "Is it quite safe for me to
come in? I've such a lovely valentine
—from Sam, of course—that I must
show you, even if I catch the fever. It's
St. Valentine's Day, you know. Did
you ever have a valentine, Miss Bertha?"

"Once—ages nearer the beginning."
"Oh, by-the-way," put in Dr. March,
"here's something for you that I took
from the mail as I came along. It's a
valentine, too; it has a blue stamp.
Who knows?"

"Perhaps so," laughed Miss Bertha,
opening and reading:

"Though he seek till he be gray,
Love will find out the way."
—ANGUS AIKEN.

"HERRINGTON ARMS."
"Why, what does it mean?" she cried
rising and flushing strangely. "Who
could have been so cruel? Who could
know? Who—"

"My dear child," said Dr. March,
"who could know what? Angus Aiken
is the name of our patient at the Her-
rington Arms. Didn't I tell you that
you had won his heart? It's a valentine
indeed!"

"Just to think," said the second Mrs.
Chapell—"just to think of Miss Bertha
marrying at her time of life! Who's
going to do our sewing? Wonders never
will cease. And to think that was an
old affair—of twenty years standing! and
they say he's been from Dan to Beershe-
ba to find her, and has more money than
he knows what to do with."

The Arab's Faithful Horse.
A most moving incident, illustrative
of the extraordinary strength, as well as
attachment, of the Arab horse, is given
by Lamartine, in his beautiful travels
in the East.

An Arab chief, with his tribe, had at-
tacked in the night a caravan of Damas-
cus and plundered it. When loaded with
the spoils, however, the robbers were
overtaken in their return by some horse-
men of the pasha of Acre, who killed
several and bound the remainder with
cords. In this state of bondage they
brought one of the prisoners, named
Abon el Marek, to Acre, and laid him
bound hand and foot, wounded as he
was, at the entrance of the tent, as they
slept at night.

Kept awake by the pain of his wounds,
the Arab heard his horse's neigh at a
little distance, and, being desirous to
stroke for the last time the companion
of his life, dragged himself up, bound
as he was, to his horse, which was pick-
eted at a short distance.

"Poor friend," said he, "what will
you do among the Turks? You will be
shut up under the roof of a klan, with
the horses of the pasha or an aga. No
longer will the women and children
of the tent bring your barley, camels'
milk or donkeys' in the hollow of their
hands; no longer will you gallop, free
as the wind of Egypt, in the desert; no
longer will you cleave with your bosom
the waters of the Jordan, which cool
your sides, as pure as the foam of your
lips. If I am to be a slave, at least you
may go free. Go, return to our tent,
to which Marek will return no more, but
put your head still into the folds of the
tent and lick the hands of my children."

With these words, as his hands were
tied, he made with his teeth the fetters
which held the courser bound, and set
him at liberty. But the noble animal,
on receiving its freedom, instead of
bounding away to the desert, bent over
its master, and seeing him in fetters
and on the ground, took his clothes
gently in his teeth, lifted him up, and
set off at full speed toward home. With-
out ever resting, he made for the distant
but well-known tent in the mountains of
Arabia. He arrived there in safety,
and laid his master safe down at the feet
of his wife and children, and immedi-
ately dropped down dead with fatigue.

The whole tribe mourned him, and his
name is still constantly in the mouths of
the Arabs in Jericho.

A Mysterious Occurrence Explained.
An Englishman went into a church in
Rome the other day, and as a service
was going on he sat quietly down, plac-
ing his hat on the ground beside him.
After waiting a little while, and as there
seemed no immediate prospect of the
ceremony coming to an end, he thought
he would go, and reached for his hat,
but was stopped by an unseen arm which
grasped him from behind. Thinking
that probably some custodian of the
church wished him to remain till the
conclusion of the service, he again
waited.

Presently he again thought of going,
again reached for his hat, and again the
unseen arm firmly prevented him. Con-
vinced that the service was really some
important one which his leaving would
disturb, the Englishman again waited
for about a quarter of an hour. At the
expiration of that time he determined to
depart, in spite of etiquette. So he again
reached for his hat. Again the hand
grasped him, but as he determinedly re-
sisted his restraining efforts a voice behind
him exclaimed in English: "I beg your
pardon, but that is my hat you are tak-
ing." And this was the fact. Our hero
had been detained all this time because
each time he wished to go he had reached
in mistake for the hat of another
stranger, placed in close proximity to his
own.—London Examiner.

The Threshing Floor in Spain.
The threshing floor era has again
come into use in Spain. It is an insti-
tution of ancient times. A circle some
thirty feet in diameter is drawn by the
primitive means of a stick and string,
and the circumference bordered with
goodly stones. Over the interior area,
first well broken up by a pick, clay is
thickly spread and leveled, and water is
turned over on the whole surface, which
is then beaten smooth by heavy mallets
and left to dry in the sun. These floors
which are often the scene of great fe-
stivity, of moonlight dances and quiet
hours of chat after the day's work is
done, and the tired workmen throw
themselves down on the filled up shaves
to smoke their cigarettes, present also
at the time of the wheat threshing
as characteristic scenes as any, perhaps,
to be witnessed among these primitive
husbandmen. The sight of witnessing
the threshing is one novel and pleasant
to behold.

Items of Interest.
It takes a pickpocket to disperse
crowd.
Bull-back riding is a risky new hila
at San Francisco.
"Link" is the appropriate name of
New York sausage maker.
One justice of the United States
preme court chews tobacco.
The pale air is streaked with fi-
ments of New Year resolutions.
It is estimated that 20,000,000,000
oysters scollop the Atlantic coast.
P. T. Barnum has a cattle ranch
Colorado, with 4,000 cattle on it.
A Portland (Me.) cow has adopted
couple of fawns that were left most
less.

Of the 200 American exhibitors at
Paris exposition, 171 are said to be
New York.
A proverb of the time, after P.
Richard—He who goes collecting,
turns reflecting.

The aggregate value of church prop-
erty in New York is \$55,789,600; the
debt, \$7,547,914.
Japan has twenty-five national banks
with \$23,000,000 capital, all establi-
shed within less than two years, and all
Japanese management.

Of the farms in Pennsylvania seven-
ty per cent are cultivated by the
owners, twenty-one per cent are far-
med on shares and nine per cent are ten-
anted.

John Johnson and wife, of Freeport,
Me., aged respectively ninety-two
and ninety years, have recently celebrat-
ed the seventieth anniversary of their
marriage.

A lassie wrote to a young man she
taken a fancy to, "Come and meet
in the gloaming, John," and when
time came John wasn't there. He ac-
cidentally explained that he could
find such a place.

The enormous length of Welsh pro-
verbs compels even the natives to
abbreviate in common conversation. The
name of a parish in Anglesey, the name
which we cannot spare the space
print in full, but they call it Llan
pwllyngyllgogertylliogoch for short.

American palace cars are now
found all over the world. When
Oscar opened a railway in Norway
October he traveled in a carriage
by a firm in Wilmington, Del., on
model of one exhibited in Philadelphia
which was bought by the emperor
Brazil.

Originally the peach was a poison
almost. In olden times its fleshy part
were used to poison arrows, and it
for this purpose introduced into Per-
sia. The transportation and cultivation
only removed its poisonous property
but produced the delicious fruit we
now enjoy in its season.

A London letter, alluding to Stan-
ley's expedition has cost the New
Herald and London Telegraph \$100,000.
Stanley's report of it, in 10
forms, with illustrations, will net
half a million dollars. It will no
have the largest sale of any book
travels ever written. The Daily
graph now issues 300,000 copies of
all printed in two hours on six light
presses."

The growing of clover-seed for ex-
ports has assumed large proportions. It
grown in every State in the Union.
states growing the largest amounts
as follows: Pennsylvania, 200,670 b-
els; Ohio, 102,355; New York, 98,
Indiana, 61,168; Michigan, 49,
Maryland, 35,040; New Jersey, 26,
Virginia, 11,867; Illinois, 10,448;
nessee, 8,564; South Carolina, 5,
Maine, 5,255; West Virginia, 3,
Wisconsin, 1,906. England takes a
one-half the export quantity, the
of the balance going to Germany
Scotland.

A THRENODY.
The Akhond of Swat is dead.—L
Papers.
What, what, what,
What's the news from Swat?
Sad news,
Sad news
Comes by the cable led
Through the Indian ocean's bed,
Through the Persian gulf, the Red
Sea and the Med.
Herrington—his dead—
The Akhond is dead!
For the Akhond's mourn.

Who weeps?
He strove to disregard the message sent
But he Akhond!
Dead, dead, dead;
(Sorrow, Swat!)
Swat's who has with Akhond bled,
Swat's whom he hath often led
Onward to a glory bed,
Or to victory.
As the Swat might be
Sorrow, Swat
Tears shed
Shed tears like water,
Your great Akhond is dead!
That's Swat's the matter!